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LIVELY ARTS

Pandora's Box of The Jazz Critic

By Ralph J. Gleason

LET NOBODY tell you that a writer doesn't dig getting mail. He does! Even the bum raps and the gripes.

Opening the mail is usually a series of ups and downs as the compliments alternate with the raps, bum or justified. Like this batch:

"Regarding your article on the Actor's Workshop . . . . WONDERFUL—MARVELOUS—and it's about time those words were said. I thought it would never happen.

"I have never written a letter before to a columnist and don't know exactly what to say but your article had more punch and sense to it concerning the Workshop than anything I've read in ten years—**Hilde Clark, Greenbrae.**

Well, I no sooner got through THAT than blushing with justified pride, I opened the next.

"Your fluff off of our group was fairly obvious during our stay at El Matador. You managed to cover everyone else in town and whether you dig the group or not is beside the point. You could at least have been objective enough to write a line or two— whether it be good or bad. Despite no help from you we managed to pack the place every night! —**Cal Tjader.**

Well, Cal's right, of course. I want to say that and then add immediately it wasn't I who belted him in front of Enrico's Coffee House last week.

It does no good to explain a thing like this. I should have gone and I didn't go. At the time it didn't seem to me I was fluffing off the group, I was disappointed I hadn't gone. But this is a tough business and nothing is more fugitive than yesterday's write up. It's todays that counts. Cal's been a good friend for years and a fine musician and I hope I have the pleasure of hearing him soon. And not getting hit with a mallet, either. There was the time that Muggsy Spanier chased Leonard Feather down Seventh avenue into the White Tower hamburger joint!

★ ★ ★

And just to continue THAT mood. Here's the next one.

"In your column of January 6 you referred to a recording Lenny Bruce is selling via mail order. I wrote you within a day or two, enclosing a self-addressed envelope and asking how I might obtain such a record. Would you please do me the courtesy of a reply?"—**R. V. Vestwood, Santa Clara.**

Well, you can bet I hustled right on over to the typewriter THEN! The next letter I slit open read like this:

"In reference to your article on page 23 of this week's Datebook (Jan. 24) I sincerely hope that as far as your reading public is concerned, the 'troubles of producer Kenneth Anger' do NOT 'immediately come to mind' as I am not, as a matter of fact, connected in any way with the film 'Flaming Creatures.'"

"'Flaming Creatures' is by Jack Smith. I feel a public correction is in order."—**Kenneth Anger, San Francisco.**

Wow! One of our creatures flamed too soon, I guess. Anyway, I'm sorry I mixed up "Flaming Creatures" with Mr. Anger's "Scorpio Rising" which, he says, is now running in L.A. and recently completed a three-month run at The Movie without any interference from the police.

★ ★ ★

Then there was another zinger from the Actor's Workshop column aftermath. It went like this:

"Stick to music, will you? Your philistine views on the Actor's Workshop today were infuriating. Can't there be more forms of culture than jazz and other night club acts? . . . keep your claws and fangs off the drama!" —**D. Meyers, Mill Valley.**

Well, it takes two to tango and a difference of opinion is what makes good copy, or so it seems. Like I say, there's one thing about the mailbag. It's a Pandora's box, that's what it is!

AD LIBS

Tenor saxophonist **Sammy Simpson** has a jam session Sundays from 4 to 8 at the Sound Track out on Mission . . . Singers **Frank D'Rone** and **Gale Garnett** share the hungry i show beginning February 22 with comic **Jackie Vernon.** On March 22 **Carmen McRae** opens at the club and on April 26 **Miriam Makeba** takes over . . . **Carmen McRae** plays the Colony Club in Monterey February 26 and 27 . . . **John Lewis** is recording another LP for Columbia with Orchestra U.S.A. Columbia will also record **Tony Bennett** and **Count Basie** in a concert in May.

Reviews From the All New Committee Show. Open Now:

"Maniacally and incredibly funny . . . I doubled over with pleasure . . . The Committee is at least twice as woolly and wildly entertaining as six months ago . . . a sense of satire that could scarcely be improved." —Eichelbaum, Examiner

"More hilarious than ever . . . deft and sharp . . . infectious, disrespectful humour . . . The Committee has learned how to shred complacency to bits in the politest and most effective manner." —Knickerbocker, Chronicle

"Lively, engaging, imaginative, and—above all—funny. They are adept at catching the empty smile, the growing suspicion, the earnest confusion, the mindless rhetoric and the admirable self-delusion of we the people." —Dusheck, News Call

(Original Committee members, back from N.Y.)

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